(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken for the implementation of above proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

[Translation]

Branch Post Offices in Bihar

221. SHRI LALIT ORAON : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to open branch post offices in rural areas of Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any target have been fixed in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to provide postal facilities to rural population?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. It is the policy of the Government to open Branch Post Offices in rural areas progressively under the Annual Plans subject to norm based justification and availability of resources;

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) There is a target to open 10 Post Offices in rural areas of Bihar during the year 1996-97.

(e) The Government have so far sanctioned 176 Extra-Departmental Branch Post Offices in Bihar under the 8th Five Year Plan (i.e. 1992-93 to 1996-97).

Refund and Compensation to Consumers

222. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :
SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of occasions during the last two years, till 31.10.96 when consumer courts directed the Railways to refund the money of consumers and to compensate them;

(b) the loss of revenue suffered by the railways as a result thereof;

(c) whether the reasons for the above losses have been analysed;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken to bring down the number of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) 235.

(b) Rs. 3,51,787/-.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e). Deficiency in services such as non-functioning of Aircondition and mechanical failure of coach, system failure of computer-reservation, lack of response by front line staff and the delay on the part of staff working in the refund offices. Guidelines have been issued from time to time to ensure public awareness for timely preferment of their claims for refund to the concerned authority with requisite documents. Concerned staff are educated through seminars and various meetings to give customer satisfactory service.

Sponsored Programmes on Doordarshan

223. SHRIMATI CHHABILA ARVIND NETAM : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the time limit within which sponsored programmes are sanctioned by Doordarshan;

(b) whether any discrimination is being make in sanctioning the programmes; and

(c) if not, the reasons for providing benefit to a few producers only?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) The approval of sponsored programmes depends upon the programme requirement of Doordarshan and the completion of all formalities by the applicant. Doordarshan normally takes 90 days to approve the programme after all the formalities are completed by the applicant.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Liberalisation/Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers

224. SHRI N.J. RATHWA :
SHRI JAI PRAKASH (HARDOI) :
SHRI VIJAY GOEL :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the estimated number of bonded labourers, particularly in the tribal, backward and hilly areas, State-wise;

(b) whether any action plan has been formulated/ proposed to be formulated for their liberalisation and rehabilitation;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of bonded labourers liberated/ rehabilitated so far, State-wise, and particularly in Gujarat;

(e) whether any assistance has been provided for the purpose during the last three years to each State and particularly to Gujarat;